

Semele.

William Congreve (1710). Originally set by John Eccles. Adapted as an oratorio by Handel, 1743.

Note: this [Renascence Editions](#) text was transcribed by [Richard Bear](#), May 2001, from the 1923 Nonesuch Press type facsimile of the libretto. Any errors that have crept into the transcription are the fault of the present publisher. The text is in the public domain. Content unique to this presentation is copyright © 2001 the editor and The University of Oregon. For nonprofit and educational uses only. Send comments and corrections to the [Publisher](#).

SEMELE

A N O P E R A

A Natura discedimus: populo nos damus, nullius rei bono auctori, & in hac re, sicut in omnibus, inconstantissimo.

Seneca. Ep. 99.

ARGUMENT

Introductory to the

O P E R A of S E M E L E

AFTER Jupiter's Amour with Europa, the Daughter of Agenor, King of Phaenicia, he again incenses Juno by a new Affair in the same Family; viz. with Semele, Niece to Europa, and Daughter to Cadmus King of Thebes. Semele is on the Point of Marriage with Athamas; which Marriage is about to be solemniz'd in the Temple of Juno, Goddess of Marriages, when Jupiter by ill Omens interrupts the Ceremony; and afterwards transports Semele to a private Abode prepar'd for her. Juno, after many Contrivances, at length assumes the Shape and Voice of Ino, Sister to Semele; by the help of which Disguise and Artful Insinuations, she prevails with her to make a Request to Jupiter, which being granted must end in her utter Ruin.

This Fable is related in Ovid. Metam. L. 3 but there Juno is said to impose on Semele in the Shape of an old Woman, her Nurse. 'Tis hoped, the Liberty taken in substituting Ino instead of the old Woman will be excus'd: It was done, because Ino is interwoven in the Design by her love of Athamas; to whom she was married, according to Ovid; and because her Character bears a Proportion with the Dignity of the other Persons represented. This Reason, it is presumed, may be allowed in a Thing intirely fictitious; and more especially being represented under the Title of an Opera, where greater Absurdities are every day excused.

It was not thought requisite to haue any Regard either in Rhyme or Equality of Measure, in the Lines of that Part of the Dialogue which was design'd for the Recitative Stile in Musick. For as that stile in Musick is not confin'd to the strict Observation of Time and Measure, which is requir'd in the Composition of Airs and Sonata's, so neither is it necessary that the same Exactness in Numbers, Rhymes, or Measure, should be observed in the Formation of Odes and Sonnets. For what they call Recitative in Musick, is only a more tuneable speaking, it is a kind of Prose in Musick; its Beauty consists in coming near Nature, and in improving the natural Accents of Words by more Pathetick or Emphatical Tones.

Persons Represented.

Jupiter.

Cadmus, King of Thebes.

Athamas, A Prince of Bœotia, in love with and design'd to marry Semele.

Somnus.

Apollo.
Cupid.
Zephyrs.
Loves.
Shepherds.
Satyrs.

Juno.
Iris.
Semele, Daughter to *Cadmus*, beloved by and in Love with *Jupiter*.
Ino, Sister to *Semele*, in Love with *Athamas*.
Shepherdesses.

Chief Priests of *Juno*, other Priests and Augurs.

SCENE BŒOTIA

S E M E L E

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Scene is the Temple of Juno, near the Altar is a Golden Image of the Goddess. Priests are in their Solemnities, as after a Sacrifice newly offer'd: Flames arise from the Altar, and the Statue of Juno is seen to bow.

Cadmus, Athamas, Semele, and Ino.

1st Priest.



BEHOLD! auspicious Flashes rise;
Juno accepts our Sacrifice;
The grateful Odour swift ascends,
And see, the Golden Image bends.

1st and 2d Priest. *Lucky Omens bless our Rites,
And sure success shall crown your Loves;
Peaceful Days and fruitfull Nights
Attend the Pair that she approves.*

Cad. Daughter, obey,
 Hear, and obey.
 With kind Consenting
 Ease a Parent's Care;
 Invent no new Delay.

Atha. O hear a faithful Lover's pray'r;
 On this auspicious Day
 Invent no new Delay.

Cad. and *Atha.* Hear, and obey;
 Invent no new Delay
 On this auspicious Day.

Seme. [*apart.*] Ah me!
 What Refuge now is left me?
 How various, how tormenting,
 Are my Miseries!
 O *Jove* assist me,
 Can *Semele* forgo thy Love,
 And to a Mortal's Passion yield?
 Thy Vengeance will o'ertake
 Such Perfidy.

If I deny, my Father's Wrath I fear.
 O *Jove*, in Pity teach me which to chuse,
 Incline me to comply, or help me to refuse.

Atha. *See, she blushing turns her Eyes:*
See, with Sighs her Bosom panting:
If from Love those Sighs arise,
Nothing to my Bliss is wanting.
Hymen haste, thy Torch prepare,
Love already his has lighted,
One soft Sigh has cur'd Despair,
And more than my past Pains requited.

Ino. Alas! she yields,
 And has undone me:
 I can no longer hide my Passion;
 It must have Vent—
 Or inward burning
 ill consume me.
 O *Athamas*—
 I cannot utter it—

Atha. On me fair *Ino* calls
 With mournful Accent,
 Her Colour fading,
 And her Eyes o'erflowing!

Ino. O *Semele!*

Seme. On me she calls,
Yet seems to shun me!
What would my Sister?

Speak—

Ino. Thou hast undone me.

Cad. Why dost thou thus untimely grieve,

And all our solemn Rites prophane?

Can he, or she, thy Woes relieve?

Or I? Of whom dost thou complain?

Ino. Of all; but all, I fear, in vain.

Atha. Can I thy woes relieve?

Seme. Can I assuage thy Pain?

Cad. Atha. and *Seme.* Of whom dost thou complain?

Ino. Of all; but all, I fear, in vain.

[*It lightens, and Thunder is heard at a distance; then, a Noise of Rain; the Fire is suddenly extinguish'd on the Altar: the Chief-Priest comes forward.*]

1st Priest. Avert these Omens, all ye pow'rs!

Some God averse our holy Rites controlls,

O'erwhelming with sudden Night, the Day expires!

Ill-boding Thunder on the Right Hand rolls,

And *Jove* himself descends in Show'rs,

To quench our late propitious Fires.

Chorus of Priests.

Avert these omens, all ye pow'rs!

2d Priest. Again auspicious Flashes rise,

Juno accepts our Sacrifice.

[*Flames are again kindled on the Altar, and the Statue nods.*]

3d Priest. Again the sickly Flame decaying dies:

Juno assents, but angry *Jove* denies.

[*The Fire is again extinguish'd.*]

Atha. [*apart.*] Thy aid, Pronubial *Juno*, *Athamas* implores.

Seme. [*apart.*] Thee *Jove*, and thee alone, *Semele* adores.

[*A loud Clap of Thunder; the Altar sinks.*]

1st Priest. Cease, cease your vows, 'tis impious to proceed;

Be gone, and fly this holy Place with Speed:

This dreadful Conflict is of dire Presage;

Be gone, and fly from *Jove's* impending Rage.

[*All but the Priests come forward. The Scene closes on the Priests, and shews to View the Front and Outside of the Temple. Cadmus leads off Semele, Attendants follow. Athamas and Ino remain.*]

SCENE II.

Atha. O *Athamas*, what Torture hast thou born!
 And O, what hast thou yet to bear!
 From Love, from Hope, from near Possession torn,
 And plung'd at once in deep Despair.

Ino. Turn, *hopeless Lover*, turn thy eyes,
 And see a *Maid* bemoan,
 In *flowing Tears* and *aking Sighs*,
 Thy *Woes*, too like her own.

Atha. She weeps!
 The gentle *Maid*, in tender pity,
 Weeps to behold my *Misery*!
 So *Semele* wou'd melt
 To see another mourn.

Such unavailing Mercy is in Beauty found,
Each Nymph bemoans the Smart
Of every bleeding Heart,

But where she herself inflicts the Wound.

Ino. Ah me, too much afflicted!

Atha. Can pity for another's Pain
 Cause such Anxiety!

Ino. Cou'dst thou but guess
 What I endure!
 Or cou'd I tell thee—
 Thou, *Athamas*,
 Wou'dst for a while
 Thy Sorrows cease, a little cease,
 And listen for a while
 To my Lamenting.

Atha. Of Grief too sensible
 I know your tender Nature.
 Well I remember,
 When I oft haue su'd
 To cold, disdainful *Semele*;
 When I with Scorn have been rejected;
 Your tuneful Voice my Tale would tell,
 In Pity of my sad Despair;
 And, with sweet Melody, compel
 Attention from the flying Fair.

Ino. Too well I see
 Thou wilt not understand me.

Whence cou'd proceed such Tenderness?

Whence such compassion?

Insensible! Ingrate!

Ah no, I cannot blame thee:

For by effects unknown before

Who cou'd the hidden cause explore?

Or think that Love cou'd act so strange a Part,

To plead for Pity in a Rival's Heart.

Atha. Ah me, what have I heard!

She does her Passion own.

Ino. What, had I not despair'd,

You never shou'd have known.

You've undone me;

Look not on me;

Guilt upbraiding,

Shame invading;

Look not on me;

You've undone me.

Atha. *With my Life I wou'd attone*

Pains you've born, to me unknown.

Cease, cease to shun me.

Ino. *Look not on me;*

You've undone me.

Atha. *Cease, cease to shun me:*

Love, love alone

Has both undone.

Ino, Atha. *Love, love alone*

Has both undone.

SCENE III.

[*To them*] *Enter Cadmus attended.*

Cad. Ah, wretched Prince, doom'd to disastrous Love!

Ah me, of Parents most forlorn!

Prepare, O *Athamas*, to prove

The sharpest Pangs that e'er were born:

Prepare with me our common Loss to mourn.

Atha. Can fate, or *Semele* invent

Another, yet another Punishment?

Cad. Wing'd with our Fears, and pious Haste,

From *Juno's* fane we fled;
Scarce we the brazen Gates had pass'd,
When *Semele* around her Head
With azure Flames was grac'd,
Whose Lambent Glories in her Tresses play'd.
While this we saw with dread Surprize,
Swifter than Lightning downwards tending
An Eagle stoopt, of mighty Size,
On Purple Wings descending;
Like Gold his Beak, like Stars shone forth his Eyes,
His Silver plummy Breast with snow contending:
Sudden he snatch'd the trembling Maid,
And soaring from our Sight convey'd;
Diffusing ever as he lessening flew
Celestiall Odour, and Ambrosial Dew.
Atha. O Prodigy, to me of dire Portent!
Ino. To me, I hope, of fortunate Event.

SCENE IV.

Enter to them the Chief-Priest, with Augurs and other Priests.

Cad. See, see *Jove's* Priests and holy Augurs come:
Speak, Speak, of *Semele* and me declare the Doom.
1st Aug. *Hail Cadmus, hail! Jove salutes the Theban King.*
Cease your Mourning,
Joys returning,
Songs of Mirth and Triumph sing.
2d. Aug. *Endless Pleasure, endless Love*
Semele enjoys above;
On her Bosom Jove reclining,
Useless now his Thunder lies,
To her Arms his Bolts resigning,
And his Lightning to her eyes.
Endless Pleasure, endless Love
Semele enjoys above.
1st Priest. *Haste, haste, haste, to Sacrifice prepare,*
Once to the Thunderer, once to the Fair:
Jove and Semele implore:
Jove and Semele like Honours share;

Whom Gods admire, let Men adore.

Haste, haste, haste, to Sacrifice prepare.

Chorus of Priests and Augurs.

Hail, Cadmus, hail! Jove salutes the Theban King.

Cease your Mourning,

Joys returning,

Songs of Mirth and Triumph sing.

[Exeunt Omnes.]

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The Scene is a pleasant Country, the Prospect is terminated by a Beautiful Mountain adorn'd with Woods and Water-falls. Juno and Iris descend in different Machines. Juno in a chariot drawn by Peacocks; Iris on a Rainbow; they alight and meet.

Juno. IRIS, impatient of thy Stay,
From *Samos* have I wing'd my Way,
To meet thy slow Return;
Thou know'st what Cares infest
My anxious Breast,

And how with Rage and Jealousie I burn:
Then why this long Delay?

Iris. With all his Speed not yet the Sun
Thro' half his Race has run,
Since I to execute thy dread Command
Have thrice encompass'd Seas and Land.

Juno. Say, where is *Semele's* Abode?
'Till that I know,
Tho' thou hadst on Lightning rode,
Still thou tedious art and slow.

Iris. Look where *Citheron* proudly stands,
Bæotia parting from *Cecropian* lands.
High on the Summit of that Hill,
Beyond the Reach of Mortal Eyes,
By *Jove's* Command, and *Vulcan's* Skill,
Behold a new-erected Palace rise.

There from mortal Cares retiring,
She resides in sweet Retreat;
On her Pleasure, Jove requiring,
All the Loves and Graces wait.

*Thither Flora the Fair
With her Train must repair,
Her amorous Zephyr attending,
All her sweets she must bring
To continue the Spring,
Which never must there know and Ending.*

*Bright Aurora, 'tis said,
From her old Lover's bed
No more the grey Orient adorning,
For the future must rise
From the fair Semele's eyes,
And wait 'till she wakes for the Morning.*

Juno. No more—I'll hear no more.
How long must I endure?—
How long with Indignations burning,
From impious Mortals
Bear this insolence!
Awake *Saturnia* from thy Lethargy;
Seize, destroy the curst Adulteress.
Scale proud *Citheron's* Top:
Snatch her, tear her in thy Fury,
And down, down to the Flood of *Acheron*
Let her fall, let her fall, fall, fall:
Rolling down to the Depths of Night,
Never more to behold the Light.

If I am own'd above,
Sister and Wife of *Jove*;

(Sister at least I sure may claim,
Tho' Wife be a neglected name.)

If I th'Imperial Scepter sway—I swear
By Hell—

Tremble thou Universe this Oath to hear,
Not one of curst *Agenor's* Race to spare.

Iris. Hear, mighty Queen, while I recount
What Obstacles you must surmount;
With Adamant the Gates are barr'd,
Whose Entrance tow fierce Dragons guard:
At each approach they lash their forky Stings,
And clap their brazen Wings:
And as their scaly Horrors rise,
They all at once disclose

A thousand fiery Eyes,
Which never know Repose.

J uno. Hence *Iris*, hence away,

Far from the realms of Day;

O'er *Scythian* Hills to the *Meotian* Lake

A speedy Flight we'll take:

There *Somnus* I'll compell

His downy bed to leave and silent Cell:

With Noise and Light I will his Peace molest,

Nor shall he sink again to pleasing Rest,

'Till to my vow'd Revenge he grants Supplies,

And seals with Sleep the wakeful Dragon's Eyes.

[*They ascend.*]

SCENE II.

The Scene changes to an Apartment in the Palace of Semele; she is sleeping; Loves and Zephyrs waiting.

Cup. See, after the Toils of an amorous fight

Where weary and pleas'd, still panting she lies;

While yet in her Mind she repeats the Delight,

How sweet is the Slumber that steals on her eyes!

Come Zephyrs, come, while Cupid sings,

Fan her with your silky wings;

New Desire

I'll inspire

And revive the dying Flames;

Dance around her,

While I wound her,

And with Pleasure fill her Dreams.

[*A dance of Zephyrs, after which Semele awakes, and rises.*]

Seme. O Sleep, why dost thou leave me?

Why they visionary Joys remove?

O Sleep again deceive me,

To my Arms restore my wand'ring Love.

SCENE III.

Two Loves lead in Jupiter. While he meets and embraces

Semele, Cupid *sings*.

Cup. *Sleep forsaking,
Seize him waking;
Love has sought him,
Back has brought him;
Mighty Jove tho' he be,
And tho' Love cannot see,
Yet by feeling about
He has found him out,
And has caught him.*

Seme. Let me not another Moment
Bear the Pangs of Absence.
Since you have form'd my Soul for Loving,
No more afflict me
With Doubts and Fears, and cruel Jealousie.

Jupi. *Lay your Doubts and Fears aside,
And for Joys alone provide;
Tho' this Human Form I wear,
Think not I Man's falshood bear.*

You are Mortal, and require
Time to rest and to respire.
Nor was I absent,
Tho' a while withdrawn,
To take Petitions
From the needy World.
While Love was with thee I was present;
Love and I are one.

Seme. *If chearful Hopes
And chilling Fears,
Alternate Smiles,
Alternate Tears,
Eager Panting,
Fond Desiring,
With Grief now fainting,
Now with Bliss expiring;
If this be Love, not you alone,
But Love and I are one.*

Both. *If this be Love, not you alone,
But Love and I are one.*

Seme. Ah me!

Jupi. Why Sighs my Semele?
What gentle Sorrow

Swells thy soft Bosom?
Why tremble those fair Eyes
With interrupted Light?
Where hov'ring for a Vent,
Amidst their humid Fires,
Some new-form'd Wish appears.
Speak, and obtain.

Seme. At my own Happiness
I sigh and tremble;
Mortals whom Gods affect
Have narrow Limits set to Life,
And cannot long be bless'd.
Or if they could—
A God may prove inconstant.

Jupi. Beware of Jealousie:
Had *Juno* not been jealous,
I ne'er had left *Olympus*,
Nor wander'd in my Love.

Seme. *With my Frailty don't upbraid me,
I am Woman as you made me,
Causeless doubting or despairing,
Rashly trusting, idly fearing.
If obtaining
Still complaining;
If consenting
Still repenting;
Most complying
When denying.
And to be follow'd, only flying.*

*With my Frailty don't upbraid me,
I am Woman as you made me.*

Jupi. Thy Sex of *Jove's* the Master-piece,
Thou, of thy Sex, art most excelling.
Frailty in thee is ornament,
In thee Perfection.
Giv'n to agitate the Mind,
And keep awake Mens Passions;
To banish Indolence,
And dull Repose,
The Foes of Transport
And of Pleasure.

Seme. Still I am mortal,
Still a Woman;
And ever when you leave me,

Tho' compass'd round with Deities
Of Loves and Graces,
A Fear invades me,
And conscious of a Nature
Far inferior,
I seek for Solitude,
And shun Society.

Jupi. [*apart.*] Too well I read her Meaning,
But must not understand her.
Aiming at Immortality
With dangerous Ambition,
She wou'd dethrone *Saturnia*;
And reigning in my Heart
Would reign in Heav'n.
Lest she too much explain,
I must with Speed amuse her:
It gives the Lover double pain,
Who hears his Nymph complain,
And hearing must refuse her.

Seme. Why do you cease to gaze upon me?
Why musing turn away?
Some other Object
Seems more pleasing.

Jupi. *Thy needless Fears remove.*
My fairest, latest, only Love.
By my command,
Now at this instant,
Two winged *Zephyrs*
From her downy Bed
Thy much-lov'd *Ino* bear;
And both together
Waft her hither
Thro' the balmy Air.

Seme. Shall I my Sister see!
The dear Companion
Of my tender Years.

Jupi. See, she appears,
But sees not me;
For I am visible
Alone to thee.

While I retire, rise and meet her,
And with Welcomes greet her.

Now all this Scene shall to *Arcadia* turn,
The Seat of happy Nymphs and Swains;

There without the Rage of Jealousie they burn,
And taste the Sweets of Love without its Pains.

SCENE IV.

Jupiter retires. Semele and Ino meet and embrace. The Scene is totally changed, and shews an open Country. Several Shepherds and Shepherdesses enter. Semele and Ino having entertain'd each other in dumb Shew, sit and observe the Rural Sports, which end the second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Scene is the Cave of Sleep. The God of Sleep lying on his Bed. A soft Symphony is heard. Then the Musick changes to a diiferent Movement.

Juno and Iris.

Juno. SOMNUS, awake,
Raise thy reclining Head;

Iris. Thyself forsake,
And lift up thy heavy Lids of Lead.

Som. [*waking.*] Leave me, loathsome Light;
Receive me, silent Night.

Lethe, why does thy lingering Current cease?
O murmur, murmur me again to Peace. [*sinks down again.*]

Iris. Dull God, can'st thou attend the Waters fall,
And not hear *Saturnia* call!

Juno. Peace, *Iris*, Peace, I know how to charm him:
Pasithea's Name alone can warm him.

Juno, Iris. Only love on sleep has pow'r;
O'er gods and men
Tho' Somnus reign,
Love alternate has his hour.

Juno. Somnus, arise,
Disclose thy tender eyes;
For *Pasithea's* Sight
Endure the Light:
Somnus, arise.

Som. [*rising.*] *More sweet is that Name
Than a soft purling Stream;
With Pleasure Repose I'll forsake,
If you'll grant me but her to sooth me awake.*

Juno. My Will obey,
She shall be thine.
Thou with thy softer Pow'rs
First *Jove* shalt captivate,
To *Morpheus* then give Order,
Thy various Minister,
That with a Dream in Shape of *Semele*,
But far more beautiful,
And more alluring,
He may invade the sleeping Deity;
And more to agitate
His kindling Fire,
Still let the Phantom seem
To fly before him,
That he may wake impetuous,
Furious in Desire;
Unable to refuse whatever Boon
Her Coyness shall require.

Som. I tremble to comply.

Juno. To me thy leaden Rod resign,
To charm the Centinels
On Mount *Citheron*;
Then cast a Sleep on mortal *Ino*,
That I may seem her Form to wear
When I to *Semele* appear.
Obey my Will, thy Rod resign,
And *Pasithea* shall be thine.

Som. All I must grant, for all is due
To *Pasithea*, Love, and you.

Juno. *Away let us haste,
Let neither have rest,
'Till the sweetest of Pleasures we prove;
'Till of Vengeance possess'd
I doubly am bless'd,
And thou art made happy in Love.* [*Ex.* Juno and Iris.

[*Somnus retires within his Cave, the Scene changes to Semele's Apartment.*

SCENE II.

Semele [*alone.*]

Seme. *I love and am lov'd, yet more I desire;
Ah, how foolish a Thing is Fruition!
As one Passion cools. some other takes Fire,
And I'm still in a longing Condition.
Whate'er I possess
Soon seems an Excess.
For something untry'd I petition;
Tho' daily I prove
The Pleasures of love,
I die for the Joys of Ambition.*

SCENE III.

Enter Juno as Ino, with a Mirrour in her hand.

Juno [*apart.*] Thus shaped like *Ino*.
With Ease I shall deceive her,
And in this Mirrour she shall see
Herself as much transform'd as me.
Do I some Goddess see!
Or is it *Semele*?

Seme. Dear Sister, speak,
Whence this Astonishment?

Juno. Your Charms improving
To Divine Perfection,
Shew you were late admitted
Amongst Celestial Beauties.
Has *Jove* consented?
And are you made Immortal?

Seme. Ah no, I still am Mortal;
Nor am I sensible
Of any Change or new Perfection.

Juno [*giving her the Glass.*] Behold in this Mirrour
*Whence comes my Surprise;
Such Lustre and Terror
Unite in your Eyes,*

*That mine cannot fix on a Radiance so bright;
'Tis unsafe for the Sense, and too slipp'ry for sight.*

Seme. [looking in the Glass.]

O Ecstasy of Happiness!

Celestial Graces

I discover in each Feature!

Myself I shall adore,

If I persist in gazing;

No Object sure before

Was ever half so pleasing.

How did that Glance become me!

But take this flatt'ring Mirror from me.

Yet once again let me view me.

Ah charming all o'er!

[Offering the Glass, withdraws her hand again.]

Here—hold, I'll have one Look more.

Tho' that Look I were sure would undo me.

Juno [taking the Glass from her.]

Be wise as you are beautiful,

Nor lose this Opportunity.

When *Jove* appears,

All ardent with desire,

Refuse his proffer'd Flame

' Till you obtain a Boon without a Name.

Seme. Can that avail me?

Juno. Unknowing your Intent,

And eager for possessing,

He unawares will grant

The nameless Blessing.

But bind him by the Stygian Lake,

Lest Lover-like his word he break.

Seme. But how shall I attain

To Immortality?

Juno. Conjure him by his Oath

Not to approach your Bed

In likeness of a Mortal,

But like himself, the mighty Thunderer

In Pomp of Majesty,

And heav'nly Attire;

*As when he proud *Saturnia* charms,*

And with ineffable Delights

Fills her encircling Arms,

And pays the Nuptial Rites.
By this Conjunction
With entire Divinity
You shall partake of heav'nly Essence,
And thenceforth leave this Mortal State
To reign above,
Ador'd by *Jove*,
In spite of jealous *Juno's* Hate.

Seme. *Thus let my Thanks be paid,
Thus let my Arms embrace thee;
And when I'm a Goddess made,
With Charms like mine I'll grace thee.*

Juno. Rich Odours fill the fragrant Air,
And *Jove's* Approach declare.
I must retire—

Seme. Adieu—Your Counsel I'll pursue.

Juno. [apart] And sure Destruction will ensue.
Vain wretched Fool—[*To her.*] Adieu.

SCENE IV.

Jupiter enters, offers to embrace Semele; she looks kindly on him, but retires a little from him.

Jupi. *Come to my Arms, my lovely fair,
Soothe my uneasie Care:
In my Dream late I woo'd thee,
And in vain I pursu'd thee,
For you fled from my Pray'r,
And bid me despair.
Come to my Arms, my lovely Fair.*

Seme. *Tho' 'tis easie to please ye,
And hard to deny;
Tho' Possessing's a Blessing
For which I could die,
I dare not, I cannot comply.*

Jupi. *When I languish with Anguish,
And tenderly sigh,
Can you leave me, deceive me,
And scornfully fly?
Ah fear not, you must not deny.*

Seme. *Jupi. I dare not, I must not comply.*

Ah fear not; you must not deny.

Jupi. O Semele,

Why art thou thus insensible?

Were I a Mortal,

Thy barbarous disdain

Would surely end me,

And Death at my Complaining

In Pity would befriend me.

Seme. *I ever am granting,*

You always complain;

I always am wanting,

Yet never obtain.

Jupi. Speak, speak, your Desire,

I'm all over Fire.

Say what you require,

I'll grant it—now let us retire.

Seme. *Swear by the Stygian Lake.*

Jupi. By that tremendous Flood I swear,

Ye Stygian waters hear,

*And thou *Olympus* shake,*

In witness to the oath I take.

[Thunder at a distance, and underneath,

Seme. You'll grant what I require?

Jupi. I'll grant what you require.

Seme. *Then cast off this human Shape which you wear,*

And Jove since you are, like Jove too appear;

When next you desire I should charm ye.

As when Juno you bless,

So you me must caress,

And with all your Omnipotence arm ye.

Jupi. Ah! take heed what you press,

For beyond all Redress,

Should I grant what you wish, I shall harm ye.

Seme. *I'll be pleas'd with no less,*

Than my Wish in excess:

Let the Oath you have taken alarm ye:

Haste, haste, and prepare,

For I'll know what you are;

So with all your Omnipotence arm ye.

SCENE V.

She withdraws, Jupiter remains pensive and dejected.

Jupi. Ah! whither is she gone! unhappy Fair!
Why did she wish?—Why did I rashly swear?

'Tis past, 'tis past Recall.

She must a Victim fall.

Anon, when I appear
The mighty Thunderer,
Arm'd with inevitable Fire,
She must needs instantly expire.

'Tis past, 'tis past Recall.

She must a Victim fall.

My softest Lightning yet I'll try,
And mildest melting Bolt apply:
In vain—for she was fram'd to prove
None but the lambent Flames of Love.

'Tis past, 'tis past Recall.

She must a Victim fall.

SCENE VI.

Juno appears in her Chariot ascending.

Juno. Above measure

Is the Pleasure

Which my Revenge supplies.

Love's a Bubble

Gain'd with Trouble:

And in possessing dies.

With what joy shall I mount to my Heav'n again,

At once from my Rival and Jealousie freed!

The Sweets of Revenge make it worth while to reign,

And Heav'n will hereafter be Heav'n indeed.

[She ascends.]

SCENE VII.

The Scene opening discovers Semele lying under a Canopy, leaning pensively. While a mournful Symphony is playing she looks up and sees Jupiter descending in a black Cloud; the motion of the Cloud is slow. Flashes of lightning issue from either side, and thunder is heard grumbling in the air.

Seme. Ah me! too late I now repent
My Pride and impious Vanity.

He comes! far off his Lightnings scorch me.
—I feel my Life consuming:
I burn, I burn—I faint—for Pity I implore—

O help, O help—I can no more. [*Dies.*

[As the Cloud which contains Jupiter is arrived just over the Canopy of Semele, a sudden and great Flash of Lightning breaks forth, and a Clap of loud Thunder is heard; when at one instant Semele with the Palace and the whole present Scene disappear, and Jupiter re-ascends swiftly. The Scene totally changed represents a pleasant Country, Mount Citheron closing the Prospect.

SCENE VIII.

Enter Cadmus, Athamas and Ino.

Ino. Of my ill boding Dream
Behold the dire Event.

Cad., Atha. O Terror and Astonishment!

Ino. How I was hence remov'd,
Or hither how return'd, I know not:
So long a Trance with-held me.
But *Hermes* in a vision told me
(As I have now related)
The Fate of *Semele*;
And added, as from me he fled,
That *Jove* ordain'd I *Athamas* should wed.

Cad. Be *Jove* in every thing obey'd.

Atha. Unworthy of your Charms, myself I yield;
Be *Jove's* Commands and yours fulfill'd.

Cad. See from above the bellying Clouds descend,
And big with some new Wonder this way tend.

SCENE IX.

*A bright Cloud descends and rests on Mount Citheron, which opening, discovers
Apollo seated in it as the God of Prophecy.*

*Apollo. Apollo comes to relieve your Care,
And future Happiness declare.
From Tyrannous Love all your Sorrows proceed,
From Tyrannous Love you shall quickly be freed.
From Semele's Ashes a Phænix shall rise,
The Joy of this earth, and Delight of the skies:
A God he shall prove
More mighty than Love,
And a Sovereign Juice shall invent,
Which Antidote pure
The sick Lover shall cure,
And Sighing and Sorrow for ever prevent.
Then Mortals be merry, and scorn the Blind Boy;
Your Hearts from his Arrows strong Wine shall defend:
Each Day and each Night you shall revel in Joy,
For when Bacchus is born, Love's Reign's at an end.*

Chorus.

Then Mortals be merry, etc.

Dance of Satyrs.

[exeunt omnes.]

THE END.

